

Suspension of Activities at Workplace Premises to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission

1. On 3 April 2020, MOH issued a press release on “Additional Measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19 Cases” which outlined enhanced safe distancing measures to reduce the risk of further local transmission of COVID-19. The measures include the closure of workplace premises, retail outlets except for those necessary to support the daily living needs of the population, and limiting restaurants and food and beverage outlets to takeaway or delivery only.

2. This document elaborates on the suspension of activities at workplace premises. To prevent further spread of the virus, the following measures are for strict compliance with effect from 7 April 2020.

- a. **Essential Services and their related supply chains and service providers are exempted from the suspension. All other business, social, or other activities that cannot be conducted through telecommuting or other means from home shall be suspended from 7 April 2020 to 4 May 2020.** The list of activities that will be allowed to continue to operate will be updated at <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/essentialservices>.
- b. **Entities that are able to continue to operate their business (in limited or full capacity) with their employees working from home should continue to do so.**
- c. **The provision of food and essential health items to the public is an essential service. Food suppliers (including food and food ingredient production, food manufacturing, food processing, abattoirs/slaughter houses, food caterers, importers & traders and food logistics-cold stores/warehouses), food retail (including supermarkets, convenience stores, grocery & fruit stores, wholesale markets, wet markets), food & beverages (F&B) outlets (including restaurants, hawker centres, coffeeshops and food courts), and pharmacies will remain open.** However, F&B outlets can only offer take-away and deliveries only; no dining in is allowed.
- d. **Entities providing Essential Services must comply with the following:**
 - i. **All activities that can take place through telecommuting must be done from home.**
 - ii. **Employers must implement safe distancing measures to reduce physical interactions by:**
 - Reducing the need for and duration of physical interactions;
 - Staggering working hours;
 - Postponing all group events ; and
 - Implementing shift work and/or split team arrangements

- iii. **F&B outlets (including restaurants, hawker centres, coffeeshops and food courts) can continue to operate for take-away and/or delivery only.** This is to reduce interactions outside of the household. Outlets which do not currently offer take-away and/or delivery can do so or allow third-party food delivery services to do so for them. While patrons and delivery drivers can continue to enter the premises to access take-away services, **there will be no dine-in service**, and nobody is should consume any food or drinks on-site whilst waiting for takeaway food. F&B outlets that remain open must adhere to the enhanced *Safe Distancing Measures* in their premises, and minimise crowds by ensuring patrons are spaced at least 1 metre apart at all times (i.e. within the premise and when queuing).
3. Entities which carry out activities listed in Annex A can continue to operate from their workplace premises. They can continue to operate until informed otherwise. They are required to submit details of their plans to operate with enhanced safe distancing measures in place at <https://covid.qobusiness.gov.sg> by end of 13 Apr.
4. Entities which would like to be exempted from the suspension should first read this guidance document and *Frequently Asked Questions* provided at Annex B by MTI, and should they still wish to apply to be exempted, they may make an application at <https://covid.qobusiness.gov.sg>. Only entities performing, or providing critical support for, essential services will be exempted.
5. We expect these measures to be in place until 4 May 2020, but this may be extended if necessary. Social responsibility is critical in slowing the transmission of the virus. We urge everyone to play their part in the fight against COVID-19. Those who are unwell, even with mild flu-like symptoms, should see a doctor and stay at home to prevent any potential transmission of illness to others. By exercising social responsibility, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones.
6. The Multi-Ministry Taskforce will regularly review the *Safe Distancing* measures and calibrate them as the global and local situation evolves. Members of the public are advised to refer to the MOH website (<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>) for the latest measures. For business owners who wish to find out more on the suspension of activities, please see the *Frequently Asked Questions* in Annex B or contact our call centre at 6898 1800 or SafeDistancing@enterprisesg.gov.sg .

MINISTRY OF TRADE & INDUSTRY
3 APRIL 2020

List of Essential Services and related supply chains

Please refer to <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/essentialservices> for latest list.

Frequently Asked Questions

For essential services companies	
1.	How will I know whether my company is carrying out an essential activity and should therefore be exempted from suspension?
	Only essential services and related supply chains are exempted from the suspension. Carefully review the full list of essential services exempted from the suspension in <u>Annex A</u> of this advisory. If your company performs any of the services in <u>Annex A</u>, you may continue to perform those services and operate from your workplace premises with safe distancing practices in place. You will need to submit the relevant details at https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg by end of 13 Apr for review, and can continue operating until informed otherwise. Should your services be found not to be part of the list of essential services in <u>Annex A</u> , you will be required to stop operations.
2.	My company's activities are not listed in Annex A, but we support an essential service that is listed. What should I do?
	If your company supports an activity listed in <u>Annex A</u> , please submit an application through https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg , you will need to provide details such as the names of the essential firms and the goods and/or services that you provide to these firms. We will respond to you within 48 hours if you are allowed to continue operating during the suspension period. You may continue with your support of the essential service while waiting for our response if you have safe distancing practices in place. Should your services be found not to be a critical activity in support of an essential services in <u>Annex A</u> , you will be required to stop operations.
3.	My company provides essential services and I have been contacted by a government agency, why do I need to submit details of my operations in order to continue operating?
	This is so that agencies can verify the nature your business activities and assess the number of workers that need to operate on-site. All activities of your company that can take place through telecommuting must be conducted through telecommuting from home.
4.	My company is carrying out an essential activity listed in <u>Annex A</u> and I have submitted details of my operations and manpower more than 24 hours ago but I have not gotten a reply. What should I do?

	You may continue with on-site operations until you receive a reply from us. Do check your junk mail folder and add Covid_GoBusiness@mti.gov.sg to your safe recipients list.
5.	My company's activities are not listed in <u>Annex A</u> but they are essential, can I apply for an exemption?
	If your company's activities are not listed in <u>Annex A</u> , you must suspend your on-site activities. You may continue telecommuting activities from home. If you believe that your company's activities are essential and you would like to be considered for an exemption, please submit an application through https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg , with the relevant supporting information including justifications for why your activities are essential. All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. You must wait for approval of your exemption application before you recommence onsite activities.
For non-essential services companies	
6.	Can I continue to run my business as normal if my company is not providing an essential service?
	If the service that your business provides is not on the essential services list, you must suspend all in-person activities and activities at your business location. You can continue to operate if you and your employees are able to perform business functions from home and are strongly encouraged to do so.
7.	Is my company required to suspend all business activities if my operations cannot continue via telecommuting?
	Essential services and related supply chains are exempted from the suspension of on-site business activities. If your company's business activities are non-essential, but can continue to operate via telecommuting, you may continue to do so. Where possible, businesses are encouraged to adopt video and audio conferencing and other IT tools to support their workers to work from home. For selected functions that need to continue but cannot be performed via telecommuting due to sensitivity (e.g. payroll processing), please apply for a time-limited exemption through https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg .
8.	Can my company continue to operate if I adhere to safe distancing and other precautionary measures (e.g. mandatory temperature taking, submission of travel declarations)?

	<p>All non-essential activities outside the home shall be suspended during this period. Where employees can perform their work by telecommuting from home, the employer must ensure that they do so.</p> <p>Special attention should be paid to vulnerable employees (e.g. older workers, pregnant workers, and those with underlying medical conditions) to enable them to work from home, including temporarily redeploying these employees to another role within the company that is suitable for working from home.</p>
9.	If my business does not conduct essential activities, can I go to my place of business to perform maintenance of the facility, attend to perishable products, receive deliveries or perform other necessary tasks?
	<p>If you are the owner of a non-essential business, you may go to your business location to take care of crucial tasks that cannot be done remotely or to retrieve necessary materials or documents. Your employees are not permitted to go to your place of business. They may work remotely from home.</p> <p>If you need to activate your employees to work on-site for short periods of time (i.e. less than a day), you need to apply for a time-limited exemption through https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg.</p> <p>If you need to maintain a small workforce at your place of business for safety purposes, please apply for a general exemption through https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg.</p>
10.	What happens if my company is unable to pay employees' salaries due to the suspension of activities?
	<p>The Jobs Support Scheme (JSS) will help enterprises retain their local employees during this period of uncertainty. All active employers, with the exception of Government organisations (local and foreign) and representative officers, are eligible for the JSS. For more details, please visit the IRAS website at http://www.iras.gov.sg or call the hotline 6356 8233.</p>
11.	Is my company still required to pay rental during the period of suspension of activities?
	<p>To provide greater support for businesses, stallholders at hawker centres and markets would get enhanced rental waiver of three months, with a minimum waiver of \$200 per month. The eligible commercial tenants in Government-owned or managed facilities would be given two months of rental waivers, up from half a month. Government agencies</p>

	such as JTC, SLA, HDB, URA, BCA, PA and Nparks would provide half a month rental waiver to eligible tenants of other non-residential premises. Eligible tenants include those who did not pay property tax.
12.	Should my company continue with medical insurance coverage for foreign employees, given that they are unable to work during the suspension of activities?
	Yes, employers who fail to meet the medical insurance requirement for their foreign workers (WP, S Pass holders and FDW) may be fined up to \$10,000 or jailed up to 12 months, or both. In addition, they may be barred from employing foreign workers. The medical insurance requirement is not applicable to EP holders.
13.	Can my employees leave their dormitories during the period of suspension of activities?
	Yes, provided they are not sick and not under Leave of Absence (LOA)/Stay Home Notice (SHN) or Quarantine Orders (QO). However, they should only do so for essential activities, such as to get food, health care or commute to their job in an essential service. They should also observe safe distancing measures when they are out.
14.	Can foreign employees be redeployed to work on areas that are not within their current approved vocations? If so, what are the procedures that companies need to follow?
	Employers can write in to MOM with reasons for the redeployment and seek for permission to do so.
<u>Sector-specific queries</u>	
15.	Can Social Service Organisations (SSOs) staff continue to deliver essential supplies to needy families during the period of suspension of activities? Can they also enlist volunteers' help?
	Yes, so long as the necessary precautionary measures are taken (e.g. safe distancing, temperature monitoring, observe good personal hygiene). This is because needy families depend on the essential supplies to survive and such essential supplies should not be interrupted as a result of the suspension of activities.
16.	Are liquor stores considered F&B outlets?
	You are only allowed to operate if you are licensed as a food retailer. Otherwise, if you are licensed as a F&B outlet, only take-aways and/or deliveries are allowed.

17.	My food establishment is located within a non-food premise (e.g. canteen located in an industrial estate). Can it be allowed to open during the period of suspension of activities?
	Yes, however, it should be opened for takeaways and/or deliveries only. No dine-in service is permitted. Patrons are not permitted to consume any food or drinks on-site whilst waiting for takeaway food.
18.	Can I continue to fulfil customers' online orders (non-food) and send the items ordered via delivery during this period?
	Only companies providing essential services listed in <u>Annex A</u> will be able to continue on-site operations during this period. For instance, supermarkets will continue to support delivery of non-food household items such as cleaning supplies.
19.	I am not an essential firm and have a shipment of goods coming in, will I be allowed to send the goods to my warehouse and will I be able to activate my employees to receive the shipment at my warehouse?
	Port operators and logistics service providers will be allowed to continue to operate during this period. If you need to activate your employees to work on-site for short periods of time to receive deliveries and perform other related tasks, please apply for a time-limited exemption through https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg .
For employees	
20.	If my employer provides essential services and I am reporting to work, do I need to provide or carry with me any sort of documentation?
	Currently, you are not required to do so. You are encouraged to confirm with your employer that the function you perform is critical and meant to be performed on-site rather than via telecommuting. Employers are encouraged to provide this confirmation to the employee in writing.
21.	Can I go back to my office to pick up personal items?
	All non-essential activities outside the home must be suspended during this period in order to bring the transmission rate down effectively. Please refrain from all non-essential travel to reduce the possibility of transmissions.
For general public	
22.	If I see a non-essential business continue to operate even though it is not supposed to, what should I do?

	Please report this business, including providing relevant details such as its name, address and relevant evidence (e.g. photographs) to Covid_GoBusiness@mti.gov.sg
23.	What do I do if I am unable to enter the supermarket/F&B outlets due to long queues?
	You may consider food takeaways at other F&B outlets or food/grocery delivery services.